Central Excise & Customs officers involved in drug smuggling

3463. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that four officers belonging to Central Excise and Customs Department were reported to have been involved with a Narcotic Gang and alleged to have helped them, indirectly, for carrying on smuggling activities in and around Delhi during the past 10 to 12 months;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and whether any action has so far been taken against any such official and if not the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a Senior Officer in the Customs Department has issued a circular to the effect that if any Customs Department employee is found guilty in any illegal transaction his Department's approval should be obtained prior to taking any legal action against such an employee; if so, the details thereof and also the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) No officers were involved in Narcotics smuggling during the past 10 to 12 months in and around Delhi. However, there was one case of smuggling of Watch Movements, Integrated of Circuits etc., in which four officers of Customs House, Delhi had allegedly connived with passengers and an employee of the International Airport Authority of India. These goods were allegedly smuggled from the warehouse on the pretext of appraisement and re-export by the passengers with the connivance of four officers of this department, all of the rank of Inspectors. All the four officers were detained under the COFEPOSA Act on 6.4.91. Their detention was however revoked on 18.06.91 by the Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi on receipt of the opinion of the Advisory Board. A complaint under the Customs Act, 1962 has been filed in the Court of the Additional Chief Metropoliton Megistrate Patiala House on 19.4.91. These officers are under suspension.

(c) A circular has been issued that no action should be taken against a departmental officer under the COFEPOSA Act 1974 without the approval of the Central Board of Excise & Customs on the ground that the COFEPOSA Act 1974 is meant to deal with smugglers and foreign exchange racketeers and that it is not to be invoked against Customs Officers in the ordinary course, except in very extreme cases.

Raids on Oswal group Of Industries

3464. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any raids and searches have been made by different intelligence departments on different units and organisations of Oswal group of Industries during the last five years;

(b) if so, what are the details of each search and investigation, separately; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR):(a) to (c) Information has been sought from various intelligence and enforcement agencies and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Review of viability of Indian Banks

3465. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any review about the health and viability of Indian Banks, especially nationalised banks has been undertaken, recently;

(b) if so, which of the banks were found profitable and which ones non-viable;

(c) what are the main reasons for the sickness of the banks; and

(d) what steps have been taken or are contemplated to reform the banking